

Daniel Byrd
External Affairs Committee Chairman
Undergraduate Student Government
University of Connecticut
Hometown: Cheshire, CT

Hello, my name is Daniel Byrd and I am the External Affairs Committee Chairman of the Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Connecticut and I am from Cheshire. Thank you for allowing us to testify before you today. As many have said before me, I am extremely concerned about the proposed budget cuts to UConn and the harmful consequences that may arise from them, both in the short term and the longterm.

I chose to attend UConn for a number of reasons including affordability, academic rigor, and location.

Here is the reality about affordability and academics: In the short term, UConn is becoming more expensive. Tuition is being raise 31% over the next 4 years to make up for the \$40 million dollar deficit we are *already* running. Continuing to cut UConn's budget will leave our school with very few options about how to deal with this fiscal crisis. Because UConn cannot raise tuition to cover *all* these cuts, we will be forced to cut programs, cut faculty, and cut staff. Increased classroom size does not help our academic standing as a University. Fewer academic programs that enrich learning will not raise UConn's national standing. Less access to crucial staff does nothing to help students graduate in four years. Our state's flagship university staying as a top ranked public school, depends greatly on funding from the state.

I want to focus, however, on third reason I chose this great school: location. UConn is the state's best tool to bring people to Connecticut and keep people in

Connecticut. Students who study here are far more likely to stay, work, pay taxes, and contribute to our great state. That's my plan. My sister, a senior in high school, has applied and wants to attend the University of Connecticut. However, UConn is facing some stiff competition from other state schools. At least three schools have matched UConn's price for her, as they do so often now, to try to draw her, and other Connecticut students, to their state. If this trend continues, more and more people like my sister will end up at Penn State or UVM and subsequently staying in those states to work and raise a family. We need to make sure that we are keeping our students here to build our state. UConn also allows Connecticut to bring students in from other states. In this room, we have students from Illinois, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and many other states. These students are making connections in Connecticut, and will likely stay in Connecticut after graduation. It is advantageous for Connecticut to keep students and bring students to our state. That goal depends on state funding.

I urge you all, please do not allow these cuts to go through. This will not only have negative impacts on students and families, but on the state as a whole. We all need to make sure UConn continues to provide the best education possible to students from Connecticut to create a dynamic workforce for this state. Thank you! Go Huskies!